

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 046789 POSS DUPE  
ORIGIN ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 H-02 SCS-06 /023 R

DRAFTED BY ARA/PAN:DGWAGNER:ZC  
APPROVED BY ARA/PAN:AFUNICELLO  
-----000825 231931Z /43  
R 231551Z FEB 78  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA

UNCLAS STATE 046789

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PN, ETRD, (MANGOLD, EDWARD C.), (CHILES, LAWTON)

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE CONFISCATION OF RELIGIOUS ARTIFACTS

1. DEPARTMENT HAS RECEIVED AN INQUIRY FROM SENATOR LAWTON CHILES ON BEHALF OF TWO CONSTITUENTS WHOSE SHIPMENT OF RELIGIOUS ARTICLES MAY HAVE BEEN CONFISCATED BY THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT. THE LETTER'S PERTINENT SECTIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

2. BEGIN QUOTE ON OR ABOUT OCTOBER 21, I SHIPPED 184 ROSARIES AND 15U MEDALS TO THE CENTRAL CATHOLIC CHURCH IN PANAMA CITY, REPUBLIC OF PANAMA, VIA FIRST CLASS MAIL. THESE WERE FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION TO THE POOR OF THE CITY AND SURROUNDING AREA.

FOR OVER THREE MONTHS THE PANAMANIAN POSTAL AUTHORITIES WITHHELD DELIVERY OF THIS SHIPMENT AND FINALLY CONFISCATED IT. THE REASON GIVEN WAS THAT IT WAS IN EXCESS OF THE VALUE LISTED ON THE DECLARATION.

THE ACTUAL COST OF THE MATERIALS -- DOLS 29.50 FOR THE  
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PAGE 02 STATE 046789 POSS DUPE

MEDALS AND DOLS 7.36 FOR THE ROSARIES (FAR BELOW THEIR MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE AMOUNT FOR FREE ENTRY DOLS 50.00) -- WAS PROVEN TO THEM BY A COPY OF THE SELLERS INVOICE, AND WAS LISTED ON THE DECLARATION AS OF "NO COMMERCIAL VALUE" "TO BE DISTRIBUTED FREE" BUT THIS DID NOT CHANGE THEIR ANTI-RELIGIOUS ATTITUDE.

...I AT 83, AND MY WIFE AT 81, TOGETHER WITH OTHER MEMBERS  
OF ST. ANNS CHURCH IN DEBARY, SPENT MANY HOURS, USING  
ARTHRITIC FINGERS, TO MAKE THESE ROSARIES FROM BEADS  
AND WIRE," ... END QUOTE

3. REQUEST EMBASSY INVESTIGATE THIS MATTER, ASSIST IN  
STRAIGHTENING THE SITUATION OUT IF POSSIBLE, AND RE-  
PORT RESULTS TO THE DEPARTMENT. VANCE

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NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** CULTURAL PROPERTY, CUSTOMS SEIZURES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
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**Draft Date:** 23 feb 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** n/a  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:**  
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**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
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**Document Number:** 1978STATE046789  
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**Drafter:** DGWAGNER:ZC  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Subject:** POSSIBLE CONFISCATION OF RELIGIOUS ARTIFACTS  
**TAGS:** ETRD, PN, (CHILES, LAWTON), (MANGOLD, EDWARD C)  
**To:** PANAMA  
**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
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**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014